

THE
M A N N E R

OF 4325.aa/62

Baptizing Infants

A M O N G
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

To which are added, *12*

A FEW ARGUMENTS in Vindication of
INFANT-BAPTISM.

With some H Y M N S.

Extracted from the WORKS of

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Dr. WALL,
Mr. P. HENRY,

Dr. CALAMY,
Dr. WATTS, and
Mr. HALLET.



L O N D O N :

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T H E

CELEBRATION of *Infant-Baptism* among Protestant Dissenters.

TH E Minister at some convenient Time, before he baptizes the Child, is to examine the Parents, and if need be, to instruct them concerning the Use and Benefit of Baptism, and their own Duty.

The Child being brought, the Minister begins with this or the like Speech, directed to the Parent, or Parents (that presenteth it.)

TH A T you may perform this Service to God with Understanding, you must know, that God having made Man in his own Image, to love and serve him, our first Parents wilfully corrupted themselves by Sin, and became the Children of Death, and the Captives of Satan, who had overcome them by his Temptation: And as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, so Death passed upon all, for that all have sinned, and came short of the Glory of God. We are by Nature Children of Wrath: For who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean. By the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation. But the infinite Wisdom and Love of the Father hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the World. The Word was made Flesh, and dwelt on Earth, and overcame the Devil and the World; fulfilled all Righteousness, and suffered for our Sins upon the Cross, and rose again, and reigneth in Glory, and will come again, and judge the World in Righteousness.

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ness In him God hath made and offered to the World a Covenant of Grace, and in it the Pardon of Sin to all true penitent Believers, and Power to be the Sons of God and Heirs of Heaven : This Covenant is extended to the Seed also of the Faithful, to give them the Benefits suitable to their Age, the Parents dedicating them unto God, and entering them into the Covenant, and so God in Christ, will be their God, and number them with his People.

This Covenant is to be solemnly entered into by Baptism (which is an holy Sacrament instituted by Christ in which a Person professing the Christian Faith (or the Infant of such) is baptized with Water into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Signification and Solemnization of the holy Covenant, in which, as a penitent Believer, (or the Seed of such) he giveth up himself (or is by the Parent given up) to [God] the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, from henceforth (or from the time of natural capacity) to believe in, love and fear this blessed Trinity, against the Flesh, the Devil and the World ; and this especially on the account of Redemption : And is solemnly entred a visible Member of Christ and his Church, a Child of God, and an Heir of Heaven. How great now is the Mercy, and how great the Duty that is before you ? Is it a small Mercy for this Child to be accepted into the Covenant of God, and washed from its original Sin in the Blood of Christ, which is signified and sealed by this sacramental washing with Water, to be accepted as a Member of Christ and of his Church, where he vouchsafeth his Protection and Provision, and the Means and Spirit of Grace, and the renewed Pardon of Sin upon Repentance, and for you to see this Happiness of your Child ? The Duty on your part, is, first to see that you are stedfast in the Faith and Covenant of Christ, that you perish not yourself, and that your Child is indeed the Child of a Believer : And then you are believingly and thankfully to dedicate your Child to God, and to enter it into the Covenant in which you stand. And you must know, that your Faith and Consent, and Dedication will suffice for your Children

Children no longer then till they come to Age themselves, and then they must own their baptismal Covenant, and personally renew it, and consent, and give up themselves to God, or else they will not be owned by Christ. You must therefore acquaint them with the Doctrine of the Gospel as they grow up, and with the Covenant now made, and bring them up in the Fear of the Lord. And when they are actually penitent Believers, they must present themselves to the Pastors of the Church, to be approved and received into the Communion of the Adult.

If there be need of satisfying the People of the Duty of baptizing Infants, the Minister may here do it; otherwise let the Questions here immediately follow*.

The Minister here says to the Parent, and the Parent answers as followeth.

IT being the Faithful and their Seed to whom the Promises are made; and no Man will sincerely dedicate his Child to that God that he believeth not in himself; I therefore require you to make Profession of your own Faith.

Quest. Do you believe in God the Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth:

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, * * * * * the third Day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

Do you believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of Sins; The Resurrection, and the Life everlasting?

Ans. All this I do unfeignedly believe.

[Or thus.]

Quest. Do you believe the Bible to be the Word of God?

Ans. I sincerely believe it is.

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Quest.

* These Questions and Answers are not always invariably the same, but only to this Effect.

Quest. Will you make the sacred Bible the Rule of your Life and Faith?

Ans. It is my solemn Determination thus to do.

Quest. Do you repent of your Sins, and renounce the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, and consent to the Covenant of Grace, giving up yourself to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as your Creator and reconciled Father, your Redeemer and your Sanctifier?

Ans. I do.

[Or thus rather, if the Parent be fit to utter his own Faith.]

Quest. Do you remain stedfast in the Covenant which you made in Baptism yourself?

Ans. Repenting of my Sins, I do renounce the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, and I give up myself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my Creator and reconciled Father, my Redeemer and my Sanctifier.]

Quest. Do you present and dedicate this Child unto God, to be baptized into this Faith, and solemnly engaged in this Covenant unto God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, against the Flesh, the Devil, and the World?

Ans. It is my Desire (or) I do present, and dedicate him for this End.

Quest. Do you here solemnly promise, that if God continue it with you till it be capable of Instructions, you will faithfully endeavour to acquaint this Child with the Covenant in which he was here by you engaged, and to instruct and exhort him to perform this Covenant, as ever he looks for the Blessings of it, or to escape the Curses and Wrath of God; that is, that he renounce the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, and live not after them: And that he believe the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. That he resign himself to God as his absolute Owner, and obey him as his Supreme Governor, and love him as his most gracious Father, hoping to enjoy him as his Felicity in endless Glory?

Ans. I will faithfully endeavour it.

Quest. Will you to this End faithfully endeavour to cause him to understand the Nature of the Christian Religion, to learn the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments,

ments, and to read, or hear the holy Scriptures, and to attend on the publick Preaching of God's Word? Will you endeavour by your own Teaching, and Example, and Restraint, to keep him from Wickedness, and train him up in a holy Life?

Answ. I will faithfully endeavour it by the Help of God.

Then the Minister prays thus, or to this Sense.

O Most merciful Father, by the first *Adam* Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and we are by Nature Children of Wrath; but thou hast given thy only Son to be the Seed of the Woman, the Saviour of the World, the Captain of our Salvation, to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, and to wash us in his Blood, and reconcile us unto thee, and to renew us by the Holy Ghost, and to bruise Satan under our Feet: In him thou hast established the Covenant of Grace, and hast appointed this holy Sacrament of Baptism for our solemn Entrance into the Bonds of the Covenant, and stating us in the Blessings of it, which thou extendest to the Faithful and their Seed. We dedicate and offer this Child to thee, to be received into thy Covenant and Church. We beseech thee take him for thy Child, renew him to the Image of thy Son, make him a Fellow-Citizen with the Saints, and one of thy Household. Protect him and provide for him as thy own, and finally preserve him to thy heavenly Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour *Amen.*

Then the Minister asks of the Parent the Name of the Child, and naming him, he * baptizes him, using these Words without Alteration.

I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

This

* Christ no where, as far as I can find, requires Dipping, but only Baptizing; which Word, many most eminent

This done, the Minister thus declares

THIS Child is now received into Christ's Church, and solemnly entred into the holy Covenant, and engaged, if he lives to the use of Reason, to live to Christ, and to bear his Cross, and confess Christ crucified,

eminent for Learning and Piety have declared signifies to *pour on*, or *sprinkle*, as well as to *dip*. As our Lord has graciously given us a Word of such extensive Meaning, doubtless the Parent, or the Person to be baptized, if he be adult, ought to choose which he best approves, since our compassionate Saviour has given us such a Liberty. What GOD has left *indifferent*, it becomes not *Man* to make necessary.

I think it proper to add here, what the very excellent Dr. *Watts* has declared concerning the Signification of this Word. "The Greek Word *baptizo*, (says he) signifies to *wash* any thing properly by *Water coming over it*: Now there are several ways of such Washing, (*viz.*) *Sprinkling* Water on it in small Quantity, *pouring* Water on it in larger Quantity, or *dipping* it under Water, either in part or in whole: And since this seems to be left undetermined in Scripture to one particular Mode; therefore any of these Ways of washing may be sufficient to answer the Purpose of this Ordinance. Now that the Greek Word signifies *washing* a thing in general by Water coming over it, and not always *dipping*, is argued by learned Men, not only from ancient Greek Authors, but from the New Testament itself, as *Luke xi. 38. The Pharisees marvelled that Jesus had not first washed before Dinner. In Greek, that he was not first baptized; and can it be supposed, that they would have him dip himself in Water? Mark vii. 4. The Pharisees, when they came from the Market, eat not except they are washed. In Greek, except they are baptized; surely it cannot mean except they were dipped. And if this should be restrained to signify washing their Hands only, yet it does not signify necessarily*

cified, and faithfully to fight under his Banner against the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, and to continue his faithful Soldier and Servant to the Death, that he may receive the Crown of Life.

Then he gives Thanks and prays in these, or the like Words.

WE thank thee, most merciful Father, that when we had broken thy Law, and were condemned by it, thou hast given us a Saviour, and Life in him, and hast extended thy Covenant of Grace to Believers, and to their Seed, and hast now received this Child into
 A 5 thy

farily dipping them ; for the Manner of washing their Hands of old, was by pouring Water on them, as *Elisha poured Water on the Hands of Elijah*, 2 Kings iii.

11. Yet further they practised the washing of Tables (in Greek, *Baptism of Beds*) as well as *Cups and Vessels*. Now *Beds* could not usually be washed by dipping, Heb. ix. 10. The *Jews* had divers Washings prescribed by *Moses*, (in Greek *Baptisms*) which were sprinkling and pouring Water on Things, as well as plunging them all over in Water. 1 Cor. xii. 2. *The Children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the Cloud and the Sea, in their Passage thro' the Red-Sea, at their March from Egypt*; not that they were dipped in the Water, but they were sprinkled by the Clouds over their Heads, and perhaps by the Water which stood up in Heaps as they passed by.

Besides, it is said further on this Head, that pouring or sprinkling more naturally represents most of the spiritual Blessings signified by Baptism, (*viz.*) the sprinkling of the Blood of Christ on the Conscience, or the pouring out of the Spirit on the Person baptized, or sprinkling him with clean Water, as an Emblem of the Influence of the Spirit ; all which are the things signified in Baptism, as different Representations of the cleansing away of the Guilt or Defilement of Sin thereby.

thy Covenant and Church, as a Member of Christ. We beseech thee, let him grow up in Holiness; and when he comes to Years of Discretion, let thy Spirit reveal unto him the Mysteries of the Gospel, and the Riches of thy Love in Jesus Christ; and cause him to renew and perform the Covenant, and to resign himself, and all that he hath entirely unto thee his Lord, to be subject and obedient to thee and Governor, and to love thee his Father with all his Heart, his Soul, and Might, and adhere unto thee, and delight in thee as the Portion of his Soul, desiring and hoping to enjoy thee in everlasting Glory. Save him from the Lusts and Allurements of the Flesh, the Temptations of the Devil, and the Baits of the Pleasure, Profit, and Honour of the World, and from all the Corruptions of his own Heart, and all the hurtful Violence of his Enemies. Keep him in Communion with the Saints, in the Love and Use of thy Word and Worship. Let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Christ the Captain of his Salvation, and be faithful unto the Death, and then receive the Crown of Life, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Then uses this Exhortation, or the like, to the Parents.

YOU that have devoted this Child to God, and engaged it in Covenant to him, must be thankful for so great a Mercy to the Child, and must be faithful in performing what you have promised on your Parts, in instructing and educating this Child in the Faith and Fear of God, that he may own and perform the Covenant now made, and receive all the Blessings which God hath promised. Hear what God hath made your Duty, *Eph. vi. 4.* Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath, but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. *Prov. xxii. 6.* Train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. *Prov. xxix. 15.* The Rod and Reproof give Wisdom, but a Child left to himself bringeth his Mother to shame. *Deut. vi. 5, 6, 7.* Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might; and these

these Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in the House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. *Josbua* saith, *Josb. xxiv. 15.* As for me and my House we will serve the Lord. And *Paul* saith of *Timothy*, *2 Tim. iii. 15.* From a Child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Then the Minister says to the People thus, or to this Sense.

YOU have heard, Beloved, how great a Dignity we are advanced to in our Baptism, to how great Duty we are all engaged. O search and try, whether you have kept or broken the Covenant which you made, and have lived according to the Dignity of your Calling. And if any of you be Unbelievers, or Ungodly, and love not God above all, and neglect Christ and his Salvation, and are yet un sanctified, and live after the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, which you here renounced ; as you love your Souls, bewail your perfidious Covenant-breaking with God. Trust not the Water of Baptism alone : If you are not born again of the Spirit also, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, *Joh. iii. 5, 6.* Baptism will not save you, if you have not the Answer of a good Conscience unto God, *1 Pet. iii. 21.* If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, *Rom. viii. 9.* Much less those unhappy Creatures, who hate Sanctification, and despise and scorn a holy Life, when they were by Baptism engaged to the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. Can you think to be saved by the Covenant you keep not ? O no ! Your Perfidiousness aggravateth your Sin and Misery. *Eccles. v. 4, 5.* When thou vowest a Vow to God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no Pleasure in Fools : Pay that which thou hast vowed ; better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. O bless the Lord, that it is a Covenant of such Grace which is tendred to you.

That

That upon true Repentance and Conversion, even your Covenant-breaking shall be forgiven; and therefore penitently cast down yourselves before the Lord, and believingly cast yourselves on Christ, and yield to the Teachings, and sanctifying Operations of the Holy Ghost. Yet know the Day of your Visitation, and forsake the Flesh, the Devil, and the World, and turn to God with all your Hearts, and give up yourselves intirely to your Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, and he will have Mercy upon you, and will abundantly pardon you. But if you still live after the Flesh, you shall die: And if you continue to neglect this great Salvation, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and Fire, which shall devour the Adversaries.

Let no Children be privately baptized, unless upon some special weighty Cause.

I am willing to add a few Passages out of the Life of the heavenly Mr. *Philip Henry*, hoping some may be engaged to follow his pious Example.

HE drew up a short Form of the Baptismal Covenant, for the Use of his Children; it was this :

I take God the Father to be my chiefest Good and highest End.

I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour.

I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide and Comforter.

I take the Word of God to be my Rule in all my Actions.

And the People of God to be my People in all Conditions.

I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord, my whole Self, all I am, all I have, and all I can do.

And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever.

This he taught his Children, and they each of them solemnly repeated it every Lord's-Day in the Evening, after they were catechized, he putting his *Amen* to it, and sometimes adding, *so say, and so do, and you are made for ever.*

He also took pains with them, to lead them into the Understanding of it, and to persuade them to a free and cheerful Consent to it. And when they grew up, he made them all write it over severally with their own Hands, and very solemnly set their Names to it, which he told them he would keep by him, and it should be produced as a Testimony against them, in case they should afterwards depart from God, and turn from following after him.

He was careful to bring his Children betimes (when they were about sixteen Years of Age) to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to *take the Covenant of God upon themselves, and to make their Dedication to God their own Act and Deed*; and a great deal of Pains he took with them, to prepare them for that great Ordinance, and so to transmit them into the State of adult Church-membership: And he would often blame Parents, who would think themselves undone, if they had not their Children baptized, and yet took no care when they grew up and made a Profession of the Christian Religion, to persuade them to the Lord's Supper. *'Tis true* (he would say) *Buds and Blossoms are not Fruit*, but they give Hopes of Fruit; and Parents may and should take hold of the good Beginnings of Grace which they see in their Children, by those to bind them so much the closer to, and lead them so much the faster in the way that is called *Holy*. By this solemn Engagement, the Door which stood half open before, and invited the Thief, is shut and bolted against Temptation. And to those who pleaded that they were not fit, he would say, that the further they went into the World, the less fit they would be. *Qui non est hodie cras minus aptus erit*. Not that Children should be compell'd to it, nor those that are wilfully ignorant, untoward and perverse, admitted to it, but those Children that are hopeful and well inclined to the things of God, and appear to be concerned in other Duties of Religion, when they begin to put away childish Things, should be incited and encouraged and persuaded to this, that the Matter may be brought to an Issue. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord; fast bind, fast find*. Abundant Thanksgivings have been rendred to God by many of his Friends for his Advice and Assistance herein.

In dealing with his Children about their spiritual State, he took hold of them very much by the Handle of their *Infant-Baptism*, and frequently inculcated that upon them, that they were born in God's House, and were betimes dedicated and given up to him, and therefore were obliged to be his Servants, *Psal. cxvi. 16. I*

am thy Servant, because the Son of thy Handmaid. This he was wont to illustrate to them by the Comparison of taking a Lease of a fair Estate for a Child in the Cradle, and putting his Life into it; the Child then knows nothing of the matter, nor is he capable of consenting; however, then he is maintained out of it, and hath an Interest in it; and when he grows up, and becomes able to chuse, and refuse for himself, if he go to his Landlord, and claim the Benefit of the Lease, and promise to pay the Rent, and do the Services, well and good, he hath the Benefit of it, if otherwise it is at his Peril. " Now, Children, (would he say) our great Landlord was willing that your Lives should be put into the Lease of Heaven and Happinefs, and it was done accordingly, by your Baptism, which is *the Seal of the Righteousness that is by Faith*; and by that it was assured to you, that if you would pay the Rent, and do the Service, that is, live a Life of Faith and Repentance, and sincere Obedience, you shall never be turned off the Tenement; but if now you dislike the Terms, and refuse to pay this Rent (*this chief Rent*, so he would call for its no Rack) you forfeit the Lease: However, you cannot but say, that you had a Kindness done you, to have your Lives put into it." Thus did he frequently deal with his Children, and even travel in Birth again to see Christ formed in them, and from this Topick he generally argued, and he would often say, *If Infant-Baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed.*

For a Close of this Treatise, I shall annex a brief Admonition, both to Christian Parents, that have brought their Children under the *Baptismal Vow* in their Infant State: And to their Children, that so early came under an Obligation to be the Lord's, and to live to him, with Reference to Duty consequent thereupon.

As for you that have devoted your Children to God in Baptism, remember (I beseech you) and take care to breed them up for him, to whom you have conse-

crated them ; expecting to be call'd to an Account about your Carriage towards them, and Management of them another Day. Take care to season their tender Minds well : Instruct them diligently in the Knowledge of God, and of their Duty to him ; and in the Nature and Import of that divine *Vow* you brought them under : Shew them, what will be the Benefits of keeping it, the Danger of breaking it, and the Duties they are obliged to by it ; and do what you can to bring them to take it upon themselves, and renew their Covenant with God in their own Persons, as as soon as they are capable. Preserve them as much as may be from the Infections of an Evil Age : Set them good Examples yourselves, and get them among as many other lively Patterns of serious Godliness as you can ; that you may thereby provoke them to Imitation : Inure them to holy Exercises from their Youth up : Possess them with as great a Reverence of the Holy Scriptures as is possible : Narrowly watch their Tongues from the first that they begin to use them ; and do what in you lies, betimes to learn them to govern their Appetites : Teach them the Worth of Time ; and spur them on to make a diligent Improvement of it : Encourage them when they do well, and reprove and correct them when they do amiss. Whatever Neglects or Miscarriages you over-look or pass by, be sure you allow them in nothing that is sinful : This will be the way for you to have Peace and Comfort, whatever be the Consequences.

Remember how many ways you are obliged hereto ; how solemnly you have promised it ; how certainly God expects it, and how severely he'll punish the Neglect of it. How sad a thing will it be, to have the Blood of your Childrens Souls lying at your Door, on the Account of your Carelessness in this Matter, where your utmost Diligence was required ? Should they hereafter prove Crosses, and Heart-breaking Afflictions, through their Undutifulness, what a sad Aggravation would it be of your Trouble, to think that all this hath arisen from your want of Care in their Education ? How will they cry out upon you here
after

after, if ever they come to be sensible and awaken'd, for your unnatural Cruelty; who tho' you might be tender enough of them, and kind enough to them in other Respects, yet minded not their Souls, took not any suitable Care to breed them up for him, to whom you devoted them? Nay, how will they in another World, if they finally persist in Wickedness, exclaim against you, who were the Instruments of conveying their Being to them, as their Souls Murderers, and the first Occasions of their endless Ruin, by your Neglect to take that care of them, which you engaged to do when you baptized them? I beseech you therefore, if you have any Regard to God, any Desire to see true Religion, serious Piety and Godliness flourish; if you have any Love to the Fruit of your own Bowels, and any Regard to your own Peace now, or hereafter, that you would make Conscience of this Matter: Pay the *Vow* you made, when you devoted your Children to God in Baptism.

And as for you, who thro' God's great Goodness and your Parents Care, had the happy Privilege of an early Baptism; Oh! be not so foolish as to cavil yourselves out of the Benefit of it. Your Parents brought you under *Vows* to God; oh! desire not to be released. Had there been a considerable temporal Estate of some Hundreds a Year, settled on your Family before you were born, upon some certain easy Conditions, to be performed not only by your Parents, but by you after them; to the Performance whereof, they should have obliged not only themselves, but you their Children: Would you not in such a Case, where the Profit on the one Hand, and Hazard on the other, is so sensible and apparent, own the binding Force of their Obligation upon yourselves, in order to your keeping the Inheritance? And will you be more unjust to God, than you would to Man? Will you own your Parents Power to engage you for a Trifle, and not in order to an everlasting Crown? But however, if you think your Parents did you wrong, and that you are hardly dealt with, you may be out of Covenant when you will: But at the same time, be it known to you, if you

disown it, you forfeit the Benefits of it; if you renounce your *Vow*, you cast off God, and reject his Favour, and must never expect an Admission into the Kingdom of Heaven.

But if you have any Concern for your Souls, any Sense of the Wretchedness of your natural State, and of the Desirableness of the Favour of God thro' Christ, you cannot but prize your early Dedication to God, as a valuable Mercy. Oh! prize it, improve it, heartily bless God for it; and stand to the *Vow* you then came under, and let it be the Business of your Lives to discharge and pay it. Don't pretend it's hard and strict; for there is nothing in it but what is necessary: Ben't impatient of its Confinements, for they are all for your Good. Think often and seriously of the Unsuitableness of your Carriage and Behaviour to the *Vow* that is upon you; and that with Sorrow and Lamentation: Think what would become of you, should God take your Forfeitures of the Blessings of his Covenant: And if you have any Regard to God, any Love to your own Souls, any Desire to be happy here or hereafter, lay aside Excuses, and without Delay, freely and solemnly own and acknowledge this *Vow* of God that is upon you, and set yourselves with all your Might to live answerably to it.

A

Few Hints of Argument for Infant-Baptism.

THE Baptism of Infants have been a troublesome Dispute indeed since the Reformation: But I shall not pretend to debate it here, but only rehearse a few Hints of Argument, which are commonly used to vindicate the Practice of Baptizing Children, *viz.*

I. *The Covenant made with Abraham, and his Seed, Gen. xvii. is the Covenant of Grace; it includes, and was designed to extend to all Believers. When God promised to be a GOD to Abraham, and to his Seed, St. Paul assures us, that by Abraham's Seed is meant, all that should imitate the Faith and Virtue of Abraham, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, Gal. iii. 7. Know ye therefore, that they who are of the Faith, the same are the Children of Abraham, Ver. 29. If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.*

The same spiritual Promises, and Blessings, which belonged to the Church under the *Old Testament*, belong also to it under the *New*, Acts ii. 39. 2 Cor. i. 20. *Abraham* is represented as the *Root*, or *Stock* of the visible Church, Rom. xi. 16, 17, &c. The *Jewish* Church are the *natural* Branches of it, the *Gentiles* are *ingrafted* into the *same Stock*, ver. 17, 24. and partake of the Blessings of it.

From these Texts (and many others might easily be produced) it seems evident, that the *Jewish* and the *Christian* Church are but one, and the same visible Church in a continued Succession, though under different Administrations, and Ordinances.

II. *The Covenant made with Abraham, and with his Seed, is still in Force. This is implied in what has been*

been already said : But it ought to be particularly considered. It is plainly asserted by the Apostle, *Gal. iii. 17.* To the same Purpose the Apostle speaks in *Rom. iv. 14, 16.* Here he declares, that the Promise made to *Abraham*, is not made of *none Effect*, or abolished, but is sure to all Believers in *all Ages*.

Ever since God called the Family of *Abraham*, and settled his visible Church in it, he has never suffered it to fail. It was an *everlasting Covenant* that he made with *Abraham*, to be his *GOD*, and the *GOD* of his Seed, *Gen. xvii. 7.* that he might be the Father both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who were brought into the Church, as in *Rom. iv. 11, 16.*

III. The Children of the *Jews* were visible Members of the *Jewish Church* under the Covenant of *Abraham*, and as such they were acknowledged, and received into it by Circumcision as the Door of Entrance, *Gen. xvii. 9—14.*

IV. The Children of *Christians* were never cut off from this Privilege, when their Fathers were received into the Church, whether they were *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and therefore they are Members of the *Christian Church* also, under spiritual Promises, and Blessings. When the *Jews* the *natural Branches* were cut off from the good Olive-Tree, their *little Buds* were cut off with them also; and when the *Gentiles* by a Profession of Faith were grafted in as *foreign Branches*, their *little Buds* were grafted in with them. *Christ* received the Children that were brought by the Hands of their Believing Parents, and laid his Hands on them and blessed them, and said, *of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Matt. x. 13—16.* The Promises of the Old Testament, wherein Children are included in some of the Prophets, do refer to the *Gentile Church* as well as the *Jewish*, *Isai. xlv. 3, 5.* *Isai. lxxv. 23.* *Joel ii. 28, 29.* For it is the Blessing of *Abraham* which reaches to his Seed, that comes upon the *Gentiles* through *Jesus Christ*, *Gal. iii. 14.* *Rom. xv. 8, 9.* that the *Gentiles* may glorify *GOD* for his Mercy.

V. *Baptism* is now (like Circumcision of old) the Sign of God's Covenant. This is plainly intimated by the Apostle in *Gal. iii. 27, 29.* Circumcision being abolished, and Baptism coming in the Room of it, Baptism should be applied to *all* those, who have any Interest in the Covenant, as Circumcision was. Now that Baptism is come in the Room of Circumcision, seems plain from *Col. ii. 12.* where the Apostle argues, that being baptized, we need not be circumcised: And besides Baptism and Circumcision signify the same thing, *i. e.* the Removal of Sin, one by cutting off, and the other by washing away.

VI. As this Sort of Reasoning seems to manifest the *Right of the Children of Christians* to these Blessings, or that they have some Interest in this Covenant, so there are some Considerations, which render it very probable, that Children should be admitted into the visible Church, by the *Christian Door of Entrance*, that is *Baptism.* As for Instance.

First, the Gospel, which is a Dispensation of greater Grace, does not *lessen*, but *increase* the *Privileges* of the Church: It takes away Yokes and Burdens indeed, such as Circumcision was, *Acts xv. 10.* but does not *diminish* its Honours, Titles, and Privileges.

Again, when the Father or Mother of a Family believed in Christ, their Households were baptized together with themselves, even where there is no Mention that the Household believed in *Christ* also: As in the Case of *Lydia* and *Stephanas*, *Acts xvi. 15.* *1 Cor. i. 16.* Now Children are usually a considerable Part of the Household.

Yet further, Children under the *New Testament* are as capable of receiving the Blessings signified, and fulfilling the Duties enjoined, as ever they were under the *Old.* It is granted, that they neither could *then*, nor can *now* understand the Blessings nor the Duties; yet they might receive the Seal of Circumcision, or of Baptism, as a Bond laid upon them in Infancy, to fulfil the Obligations and the Duties of riper Years, and

as an Encouragement to wait, and hope for the Blessings. This was the Case of *Jewish* Infants, and why may not *Christians* be favoured with it also?

The Covenant made with *Abraham*, and with his *Seed*, Gen. xvii. 7. included *Infants*. This Covenant is not repealed or disannulled (II. Ar.) It was intended to extend to *Christians*, and their *Seed* (I.) It is confirmed by God to *Christ*, (Gal. iii. 17.) i. e. It was made with *Christ*, considered as including all his Members in him. As Circumcision of old was the Sign of admitting Persons into this Covenant; so now *Baptism* is the Sign of admitting Persons into the *same* individual Covenant (V.) therefore it must be administered to the *same* Persons, i. e. to *Infants*, as well as to the Adult. When the Covenant is the *same*, the Privileges and Promises the *same*, the Seal must have been the *same*, if it had not been changed, and the *Seed* of *Abraham* to inherit must be the *same* also, unless there is any Alteration made in the Gospel. The *Seed* in that Covenant included *Infants*; and therefore *Infants* are still Part of that *Seed* of *Abraham*. The *Seed* of *Abraham* had a *Right* to the Seal of the Covenant; their *Right* still continues as the Covenant does; and therefore they are to be admitted, *Infants* in particular, to *Baptism* the present Seal of this Covenant.

If God thought fit to make any Changes, or Alterations in any Circumstance of this Covenant, it seems necessary, that he should give Notice of it in the Gospel. Accordingly as he thought fit to change the old Sign of Circumcision for Baptism, so he has in the Gospel, expressly warned us of the Change, *Acts* xv. 24. xxii. 21, 25. *Gal.* v. 2, 3. And as he chose to make one Alteration, with regard to the *Persons* to whom the Seal of the said Covenant should be applied, and to ordain that *Females*, as well as Males, should be baptized, so he has expressly told us of this Alteration in the Gospel. *Acts* viii. 12. xvi. 14, 15. *Gal.* iii. 27, 28. In like manner it must be concluded, that if God would have had a farther Alteration made, if *Infants* of believing Parents that were formerly to partake of the Seal of this Covenant were, upon the coming
of

of Christ, to partake of it *no more* * ; according to my Apprehension, undoubtedly God would have given us express Warning of it, and have told us in the Gospel, that though *Infants*, before Christ came, were in Covenant, *now* they are to be *shut out* of it. But as the Gospel says no such thing, it seems to me certain, it cannot be true. It is then really incumbent upon those Christians, who oppose Infant-Baptism, if they would make their Point good, positively to prove by Texts, which expressly declare, that the Lord Jesus Christ has *cast Infants out* of the Covenant, though before they were in it. But no such Texts can be produced : and therefore it appears, I think, certain, *they continue in Covenant*, and have still a *Right* to the *seal* of it, which *Baptism*.

It will be in vain here to urge, that the Scripture sufficiently declares against applying this Seal of the Covenant to Infants, by making *Faith* and *Repentance* the

* It may not be amiss here to subjoin a Part of one of Mr. Baxter's Arguments in his *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-Membership, and Baptism*, pag. 52. " My ninth Argument is this ; If the believing Jews Children (and consequently the Parents in point of Comfort) be not in a worse Condition since Christ than they were before, then their Children ought still to be Church-Members. (And consequently the Gift and Ordinance is not repealed.) But certainly the believing Jews Children (and consequently the Parents in point of Comfort) are not in a worse Condition since Christ than they were before ; therefore their Children ought still to be Church-Members. The Antecedent I scarce take him for a Christian that will deny. Christ did not come to make Believers, or their Children miserable, or to undo them, or bring them into a worse Condition. This were to make Christ a Destroyer, and not a Saviour ; he that came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them, came not to destroy Mens Happiness, but to recover them. He that would not accuse the adulterous Woman, will not cast out all Infants without Accusation." " The Consequence a Man would think should be out of doubt ; if it be not, I prove it thus : It is a far worse Condition to be out of the visible Church, than to be in it ; therefore if the believing Jews Children be cast out of the Church, then they are in a far worse Condition than they were before ; (and so Christ, and Faith should do them a Mischief, which were Blasphemy to imagine.) " And so I conclude, Christ did not come to Believers Hurt, by unchurching their Children."

Conditions of Baptism. For this kind of arguing would as well prove, that *Infants* heretofore were not qualified for *Circumcision*, which yet no Man will assert. As this Argument would prove too much, it must be looked upon as proving nothing. It will be needful to add as a distinct Head, that

VII. The Texts which speak of Faith as the Term of Baptism, do not at all imply, that *Infants* are not to be baptized. In the Case just now mentioned, there is a Parallel between Baptism and Circumcision. If a Heathen heretofore was proselyted to the *Jewish* Religion, and did hereupon desire to be circumcised, he was admitted to Circumcision upon the Account of his Faith in the GOD of *Israel*. And till he professed this Faith, he could not lawfully be circumcised. And if a *Jewish* Prophet had been persuading and inviting a Set of Heathens to *Judaism*, and *Circumcision*, he would have been forced to talk in such a manner as this, *viz.* " Believe in the one true GOD, and ye
 " shall be circumcised. He that believeth, and is cir-
 " cumcised, shall be saved: but he that believeth not
 " shall be condemned. Repent of your Idolatry, and
 " other Sins, and be circumcised. Circumcision now
 " saveth us, not the putting away a Bit of Flesh, but
 " the Answer of a good Conscience toward the true
 " GOD. Arise then and be circumcised, and put
 " away your Sins." In this manner, the *Jewish* Prophet must have spoke to his *Heathen Audience*. And if he had succeeded, and made Proselytes, the History of it must have been expressed in such Language as this, *viz.* " When the Heathens believed the Prophet
 " preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of
 " GOD, they were circumcised. A certain Convert
 " said to the *Jewish* Prophet, What should hinder my
 " being circumcised? The Prophet answered, If you
 " believe with all your Heart, you may. He replied,
 " I believe that there is one GOD, and that *Moses* is
 " his Prophet. And hereupon he circumcised him.
 " Others hearing, believed and were circumcised." This, I apprehend, must have been the Language, in case a Prophet had preached to a Heathen Nation,
 and

and profelyted them. And yet, I suppose, that no one would, from this kind of Language, infer, that *Infants* were not to be circumcised, or that *actual* Faith in GOD was so universally necessary to Circumcision, as that Infants were not to receive it, for want of actual Faith. As this will be allowed by every one, it must be acknowledged also, by parity of Reason, that *the very same Expressions*, when in the *same* Circumstances applied to Baptism, cannot imply that Infants are not to be baptized for want of actual Faith. I do not say, that these Expressions prove, that Infants are to be *baptized*: All I now contend for is, that they do not even *seem to imply*, that Infants are not to be *baptized*: for this they cannot do, unless in the Case above represented, they did also imply, that Infants were not heretofore to be *circumcised*. As it will be allowed, they would not have implied this, they cannot consistently be thought to imply the other.

If it had been fit to have continued Circumcision, as the Sign of God's Covenant, and Christ had actually continued it, when he gave his Apostles a Commission to profelyte the *Gentile Nations*, I do not see how he could have expressed his Thoughts better than this: *Go, profelyte all Nations, circumcising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, i. e. Prove to the *Gentiles*, that Jesus is the Christ, and when they profess to believe this, *circumcise* them. Would the Apostles, or any one else, have inferred from hence, that Infants, having not actual Faith, were not to be circumcised? Nay rather, on the other hand, the Apostles would have reasoned thus: "The Sign of GOD's Covenant, Circumcision, has hitherto been confined to one Nation, even that of the *Israelites*; but now Christ has commanded us to extend it to *all the Nations* of the Earth. He has ordered us to *go, and profelyte all Nations*, and circumcise them. Surely it is his Intention, that we should take our *Pattern* from the Practice of Circumcision among the *Jews*. He cannot therefore be supposed to mean, that we must only circumcise grown Men, who are capable of believing the Gospel, and profess to do so. It is evident he intends, that when

“ we shall have circumcised such, we should next cir-
 “ cumcise *their Male Children*, and Slaves; and that
 “ in *after Generations*, the Males among them should
 “ be circumcised the eighth Day. Thus it was at the
 “ first Institution. *Abraham* was first circumcised, then
 “ his Children and Slaves, of whatsoever Ages they
 “ happened to be; and in *after Generations* their Chil-
 “ dren were circumcised on the eighth Day. This is
 “ a Direction to us. And when we are bid to go,
 “ *profelyte all Nations, circumcising them*, we plainly
 “ see, we are not forbidden to circumcise Infants;
 “ but, on the contrary, are ordered to imitate this
 “ Example of our Father *Abraham*.” I observed, if
 Circumcision had been retained as the Seal of the
 Covenant, and the same Commission had been given
 to the Apostles, as now was given them, only the
 Word *circumcise* used instead of *baptize*, no one, I sup-
 pose, would have imagined, that Form of Expression
 would in the least have interfered with the *Circumci-*
son of Infants. It is as certain then, that the *same*
 Form of Words, applied to *Baptism*, cannot in the
 least interfere with the *Baptism of Infants*.

These Considerations, I think, fully take off the
 Force of all the *Objections* that Men think they find in
 the Scripture against the Baptism of Infants. If there
 be any thing in the Nature of Baptism, as a Seal of
 the Covenant, which confines it to such as believe,
 there must have been the same limiting Nature in *Cir-*
cumcision, which was a Seal of the same Covenant. But
 as this is certainly false, the other cannot be true. If
 an Infant was not by reason of his Age, *unqualified* to
 receive the Sign of *Circumcision*, a Seal of the *Righte-*
ousness of Faith, an Infant cannot now by reason of his
 Age, be consistently thought *unqualified* for *Baptism*,
 which is a Seal of the same.

Farther to confirm this Point, if it needs Confirmation,
 it may be observed that the same Forms of Ex-
 pression, which are urged out of the *New Testament*,
 to prove that Infants are not qualified for *Baptism*, for
 want of actual Faith and Repentance, would equally
 prove them *unqualified* for *Salvation*. From Christ's
 saying, *He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved,*
 some

some have inferred, that a Person must actually believe, or else he cannot be baptized. With as much Strength of Reason they might infer, that a Person cannot be saved, unless he actually believe; especially since it is added, *He that believeth not shall be damned.* Yet it is certain and acknowledged, that though Infants do not believe, yet they shall not be damned. It is evident then to all, that this Text must be interpreted, as speaking only of the Adult, who were capable of hearing and believing the Gospel. Since then it does not at all speak of Infants, they may be saved, and may be baptized too, notwithstanding they are not Believers. The Method of proving that they may be saved without Faith, will as necessarily demonstrate, that they may be baptized without their own Faith, notwithstanding any thing that is laid down in this Text. Thus all the Objections against Infant-Baptism are at once cut off.

VIII. *In the Christian Church from its earliest Ages, and we think from the Apostles Time, it has been the Custom to baptize the Infant Children of professed Christians.*

To prove this, I shall produce a few Witnesses, among many. 1. *Justin Martyr*, who wrote about forty Years after the Apostles, in his Dialogue with *Trypho the Jew*, pag. 59. plainly speaks of Baptism, as being to Christians in the stead of Circumcision. And in his *Apology for the Christians*, near the Beginning, he says, "Several Persons among us of sixty and seventy Years old, of both Sexes, were disciplined [or make Disciples] to Christ in or from their Childhood."

It may be needful to consider who these Witnesses for Infant-Baptism were, and what their Character, which will be found to add great Weight to their Evidence.

A short Account of *Justin Martyr*, the first Witness.

Justin Martyr, before his Conversion, was a Philosopher, and afterwards proved a great Ornament to the Church of Christ. He preached the Gospel in several Nations. A Persecution being raised by the Emperor *Antoninus*, he writ *An Apology for the Christians*, shewing the Innocence, and Holiness of the Christian Religion, which procured him Martyrdom, which he suffered with great Cheerfulness.

Please to observe, that *Justin's Word* *μαθητεύοντες*, were *discipled*, or *made Disciples*, is the very same Word that had been used by *St. Matthew*, xxviii. 19. in expressing our Saviour's Command, *μαθητεύσατε*, *disciple all Nations*. And it was done to these Persons, *Justin* says, in, or from their Childhood. And he wrote that *Apology* within forty Years of the Death of some of the last Apostles : And seventy Years reckoned back from that time, do reach into the Midst of the Apostles time.

*The Testimony of * Irenæus.*

2. *Irenæus*, born about the Time of *St. John's* Death, in his Treatise, *Adv. Hæres. lib. 2. cap. 3.* speaking of *Christ*, says, " Not disdain[ing] nor going in a Way above human Nature, nor breaking in his own Person the Law which he had set for Mankind : But sanctifying every several Age by the Likeness it has to him. For he came to save all Persons by himself : All, I mean, who by him are regenerated unto God ; Infants, and little Ones, and Children, and Youths, and elderly Persons. Therefore he went through the several Ages : For Infants being made an Infant, sanctifying Infants, &c."

This Testimony, which reckons *Infants* among those that are regenerated, is plain and full. *Dr. Wall*, in his Defence of his History of Infant-Baptism, and in the History itself, has largely shewn, that the Word *regenerating* does, particularly in the Writings of *Irenæus*, and in the usual Phrase of those Times, signify *baptizing* : He mentions some Places, which expressly declare, that *Christ* was regenerated by *John* ; meaning that he was baptized by him.

* *Irenæus* was † Bishop of *Lyons* in *France* : As he was exceeding laborious, so he was exceeding successful in his Ministry, for he converted almost the whole City from Heathenism. In his younger Years, he often heard *Polycarp* (who was *St. John's* intimate Acquaintance) discourse of that Apostle and his Teaching. This he relates of himself in his Epistle to *Florinus*. He suffered Martyrdom with the Believers of *Lyons* under the Emperor *Severus*.

† *Mr. Baxter* has, I believe, fully and clearly proved, that the ancient Churches that had *Bishops*, were no bigger than our Parishes : The Proofs are too large to be here recited.

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Near the Time that *Irenæus* wrote the above Treatise, *Clement Alexandrinus* wrote his *Pædagog.* wherein he expressly says, "The Word *Regeneration* is the "Name of *Baptism.*" (l. 1. c. 6. near the Beginning): His thus plainly declaring, that *regenerating* is the common Name for *baptizing*, does very much confirm the Argument taken from *Irenæus*, who asserts, that *Infants* were *regenerated* unto God.

Please to take Notice, how near this Man was to the Apostle's Time. *Irenæus* himself says, l. 5. c. 30. that the Revelation made to St. *John* in *Patmos*, was but a little before his Time, and that Revelation was five or six Years before St. *John's* Death. In an Age so nigh the Apostles, and in a Place where one of them had so lately lived, the Christians could not be ignorant what had been done in their Time in a Matter so public as the baptizing, or not baptizing of Infants.

3. * *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who flourished within ninety-two Years of the Apostles, (*Pædagog.* l. 3. c. 11. not far from the Beginning) very plainly intimates, that the Apostles did baptize Infants.

Quotations out of || *Origen*, who affirms, that *Infant-Baptism* was ordered by the Apostles.

4. *Origen* is not only exprefs for the baptizing of Infants, but gives his Reasons for it: In his eight Homily, or Sermon, on *Leviticus*, C. 12. he thus says, "Hear

* *Clemens Alexandrinus* flourished under the Emperors *Commodus* and *Severus*: He was Pastor of the Church at *Alexandria*, where he was very successful in his Preaching, and brought over many to the Christian Faith.

|| A more particular Character of this illustrious Witness for Infant-Baptism. *Origen* was born at *Alexandria*, Son of *Leonides*, a Martyr under *Severus*. He was so zealous for the Service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of so undaunted a Courage, that he made it his Business in his Youth, to visit the Martyrs in their Chains, and to comfort them at their Deaths: He had scarce attained the Age of seventeen Years, when he shewed an extreme Desire of going to Pri-

" Hear *David* speaking ; *I was*, says he, *shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me* : shewing that every Soul that is born in the Flesh is polluted with the Filth of Sin, and Iniquity : And that therefore that was said, which we mentioned before ; that *none is free from Pollution, tho' his Life be but the Length of one Day.*"

" Besides all this, let it be considered, what is the Reason that whereas the Baptism of the Church is given for the Forgiveness of Sins, *Infants are also by the Usage of the Church baptized* ; when, if there was nothing in Infants that wanted Forgiveness, and Mercy, the Grace of Baptism would be needless to them."

Again, in his Homily on *Luke* xiv. he says as follows, " Infants are baptized for the Forgiveness of Sins. Of what Sins ? Or when have they sinned ? Or how can any Reason of the Laver in their Case hold good, but according to that Sense that we mentioned even now : *None is free from Pollution, tho' his Life be but the Length of one Day upon Earth* ? And it is for that Reason, because by the Sacra-

son with his Father, who was taken up for his Profession of Christianity ; but being hindered by some of his Relations, he wrote an excellent Letter to his Father, to exhort him to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ even unto Death : He would have made himself a Pattern to his Father in suffering Martyrdom, had not his Mother prevented him, by taking away his Clothes in the Night. When in his Writings he speaks of Martyrs he seems to be ravished in his Spirit. When he was but eighteen Years of Age he taught Divinity, and explained the holy Scriptures, and many profited so well under him, as to suffer Martyrdom with great Constancy. The learned *Erasmus* gives us this Character of *Origen*, *He was a Man whom neither Austerity of Life, nor perpetual Labours, nor extreme Poverty, nor the subtle Devices of the Wicked, nor the Terror of Punishments, nor even Death itself could in the least stagger.* In the seventh Persecution under the Emperor *Decius*, and in the 70th Year of his Age, this excellent Christian Hero greatly suffered, having his Neck loaded with a huge Iron Chain, and his Feet set in a Pair of Stocks, stretched four Paces wide : Nevertheless he retained his Magnanimity and Constancy to the last ; breathing out pious Ejaculations, comfortable Prayers, and zealous Exhortations to the Christians, till he gave up his Spirit.

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"ment of Baptism the Pollution of our Birth is taken away, that Infants are baptized."

Yet farther, in the fifth Book of his Commentary on the Epistle to the *Romans*, he says thus, "And also in the Law it is commanded, that a Sacrifice be offered for every Child that is born; a Pair of *Turtle Doves*, or *two young Pigeons*; of which one is for a *Sin-Offering*, the other for a *Burnt-Offering*. For what Sin is this one Pigeon offered? Can the Child that is new-born have committed any Sin? It has even *then* Sin, for which the Sacrifice is commanded to be offered; from which even he, *whose Life is but of one Day*, is denied to be free. Of this Sin *David* is supposed to have said that which we mentioned before; *In Sin did my Mother conceive me*: For there is in the History no Account of any particular Sin that his Mother had committed."

"For this also it was, that the Church had FROM THE APOSTLES AN ORDER to give Baptism to Infants. For they to whom the divine Mysteries were committed, knew that there is in all Persons the natural Pollution of Sin, which must be done away by Water, and the Spirit; by Reason of which the Body itself is also called *the Body of Sin*."

The Reader is desired to observe, that *Origen* not only says, that it was the *Custom of the Church* to baptize Infants, but he very expressly affirms, "That the Church received an Order from the APOSTLES to give Baptism even to Infants."

There is one Circumstance that makes *Origen* a more competent Witness to give Evidence, whether the baptizing of Infants had been in use Time out of Mind, or not, than most other Authors that we have left to us of that Age; because he was himself of a Family that had been Christian for a long time. The other Witnesses that I have mentioned, except *Irenæus*, must have been themselves baptized in adult Age; because they were of *heathen* Parents. But *Origen's* Father was a Martyr for Christ in the Persecution under *Severus*, the Year after the Apostles 102. And *Eusebius* (in his Ecclesiast. History, B. 6. C. 19) as-
sures

shews us, that his Forefathers had been Christians for several Generations.

Now since *Origen* was born in the Year after the Apostles eighty-five (for he was seventeen Years old when his Father suffered Martyrdom) his Grandfather, or at least his Great-Grandfather, must have lived in the Apostles time. And as he could not be ignorant whether he was himself baptized in Infancy, so he had no farther than his own Family to go for Inquiry, how it was practised in the Times of the Apostles.

Besides that, he was a very learned Man, and could not be ignorant of the Use of the Churches; in most of which he had also travelled; for as he was born and bred at *Alexandria*, so it appears out of *Eusebius's* History Eccl. B. 6. that he had lived in *Greece*, and at *Rome*, and in *Cappadocia*, and *Arabia*, and spent the main Part of his life in *Syria* and *Palestine*.

5. What I apprehend very much strengthens the Truth of Infant-Baptism, that it is of a divine Original, is this, "About one hundred and fifty Years after the Death of St. *John* the Apostle, there was an Assembly of sixty-six Bishops, who spoke of Infant-Baptism, as a known, established, antient, and uncontested Practice." One *Fidus* questioned, whether Infants were to be baptized so soon as within two or three Days after their Birth, and whether it would not be better to defer their Baptism, till they were eight Days old, as was observed in Circumcision; which Scruples he proposed to this Assembly, and in which he desired their Resolution, which they sent in a Letter to him, Part of which I shall now transcribe.

" * *Cyprian*, and the rest of the Bishops, who were
" present at the Council, sixty-six in Number, to
" *Fidus* our Brother, greeting.

" We read your Letter, most dear Brother, - - - -
" But as to the Case of Infants: Whereas you judge,
" that they must not be baptized within two or three

“ Days after they are born ; and that the Rule of Cir-
 “ cumcision is to be observed, so that none should be bap-
 “ tized, and sanctified before the eighth Day after he is
 “ born : We were all in our Assembly of the contrary
 “ Opinion. For as for what you thought fitting to be
 “ done, there was not one that was of your Mind,
 “ but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the
 “ Grace and Mercy of God is to be denied to no
 “ Person. For whereas our Lord in his Gospel says,
 “ *The Son of Man came not to destroy Mens Souls, but to*
 “ *save them* - - - That the eighth Day was appointed
 “ in the *Jewish* Circumcision, was a Type going be-
 “ fore in a Shadow, and Resemblance ; but on Christ’s
 “ coming was fulfilled in the Substance. For because
 “ the eighth Day, that is the next to the Sabbath-
 “ Day, was to be the Day on which the Lord was to
 “ rise from the dead, and quicken us, and give us the
 “ spiritual Circumcision ; this eighth Day, that is the
 “ next to the Sabbath, or Lord’s-Day, was signified
 “ in the Type before ; which Type ceased when the
 “ Substance came, and the spiritual Circumcision was
 “ given to us.”

“ So that we judge that no Person is to be hin-
 “ dered from obtaining the Grace, by the Law, that
 “ is now appointed ; and that the spiritual Circumci-
 “ sion ought not to be restrained by the Circumcision
 “ that was according to the Flesh : But that all are to
 “ be admitted to the Grace of Christ ; since *Peter*
 “ speaking in the *Acts* of the Apostles, says, *The Lord*
 “ *has shewn me, that no Person is to be called common,*
 “ *or unclean.*

“ This therefore, dear Brother, was our Opinion in
 “ the Assembly ; that it is not for us to hinder any
 “ Person from Baptism, and the Grace of God, who
 “ is merciful, and benign, and affectionate to all.
 “ Which Rule, as it holds for all, so we think it more
 “ especially to be observed in reference to Infants
 “ and Persons newly born : To whom our Help and
 “ the divine Mercy is rather to be granted ; because,
 “ by their Cries and Tears at their first Entrance into

“ the

" the World, they do intimate nothing so much as
 " that they implore Compassion *."

From this Piece of History it appears, that both the Person who moved the Doubt above specified, and all the Persons who resolved it, *unanimously* agreed in this, that *Infants were to be baptized*, and that it was the settled Custom of the Church to baptize them. If the Assembly had been against Infant-Baptism, they would have answered; *It is so far from being necessary to baptize Children on the eighth Day after their Birth, that they ought not to be baptized at all, till they are of Age to judge and act for themselves.* But none of those Bishops was in this Sentiment. They all looked upon it, and talked of it, as a thing uncontested, that Infants were to be baptized.

If we look back from this Time to the Space that had passed from the Apostles Time, which was but 150 Years, we must conclude, that it was easy then to know the Practice of Christians in the Apostles Days. For some of these 66 Bishops may be thought to be at this time sixty or seventy Years old themselves, which reaches almost to half the Space: And at that time when they were Infants, there must have been several alive, that were born within the Apostles Age. And such could not be ignorant, whether Infants were baptized in that Age, when they themselves were some of those Infants. And as there was no Dispute, or Difference of Opinion (as there must have been among so many, if any Innovation had been made.) For it is here expressly said, *there was not one of Fidus's Mind*, that Infant-Baptism must be delayed till the eighth

* *A short Account of Cyprian, and the rest of the Bishops.*

Mr. Baxter, in his *Church-History*, p. 37. gives us an Account of Cyprian, and a large Assembly of Bishops, of which Number most likely these 66 were, in the following Words: " As far as I can discern by their Writings, and by History, they were the godliest, faithful, peaceable Company of Bishops that were found in any Part of the World since the Apostles Times: Cyprian's Style, and the Testimony of all just History, which concerneth him, as well as his *Martyrdom*, declare him to be a Saint indeed."

Day ;

Day ; much less then was there any of Opinion, that it was not to be at all.

“ In a doctrinal Point, *as Mr. Baxter well observes,*
 “ a Mistake is easier in a bare Narration of some one
 “ Fact : But in a Matter of Fact of so public Notice,
 “ and which so many thousands were Partakers in, as
 “ Baptism was, how could they be ignorant ? ”

Suppose it were a Question now among us, whether Persons were baptized at Age only, or in Infancy also, eighty Years before we were born : Were it not easy to know the Truth, what by Report, and what by Records ?

I shall conclude what I have to remark on this Testimony with observing, That we see here confirmed, what was said before, that Baptism was reckoned to be to Christians in the room of Circumcision. For it was upon that Account, that *Fidus* thought it must be the Time of the old Circumcision ; and the Bishops of the Council, tho’ denying that, do call it the *Spiritual* [or Christian] *Circumcision*.

*The Testimony of * Ambrose, who plainly speaks of Infant Baptism being in Use in his, and in the Apostles Time.* Ambrosius Comment. l. 1. in St. Lucæ. c. 1.

6. He is there commenting on those Words, *Luke i.*
17. where the Angel prophesies of John the Baptist,
He shall go before him in the Spirit and Power of
Elias. And after having shewn in several Particulars, how *John*, in his Office, did resemble *Elias*, and having mentioned that Miracle of *Elias* of dividing the River *Jordan*, he adds thus ; “ But perhaps this may
 “ seem to be fulfilled in our Time, and in the Apo-
 “ stles Time. For that returning of the River Wa-
 “ ters backward toward the Spring-head, which was
 “ caused by *Elias*, when the River was divided (as
 “ the Scripture says, *Jordan was driven back*) signi-

* *Ambrose* was Bishop of *Milan*, (about 274 Years after the Apo-
 stles) a Man of a mortified laborious Life : He was very courageous for
 the Cause of Christ, and bountiful to the Poor. His Life, after he
 was chosen a Bishop, was devoted wholly to feed the Church of God,
 and to gain more Souls to the Lord Jesus.

“ *fied*

“ had the Sacrament of the Laver of Salvation, which
 “ was afterwards to be instituted; by which those
 “ *Infants that are baptized*, are reformed back a-
 “ gain from Wickedness [or a corrupt State] to the
 “ primitive State of their Nature.”

He means they are freed from the Guilt of original Sin, and in some Sense reduced back to the primitive State, in which Man was before that happened. He plainly speaks of *Infants as baptized in the Apostles Time*, as well as in his own; and makes St. *John* (if his Meaning be to speak of the Persons baptized by him) in baptizing Infants for the Reformation of their Nature back again to the primitive Purity of it, to resemble *Elias* in turning back the Waters to their Spring head. But however, he does plainly speak of the *Baptism of Infants used in the Apostles Time*, which is more to the purpose.

This Passage of *Ambrose* is quoted by *Austin*, lib. 1. *contra Julian*. c. 2.

*The Testimony of * Austin, who speaks of Infant-Baptism as practised by the whole Church, and ordered by the Apostles.*

Austin, in his Treatise *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, Lib 4. C. 23. having had Occasion to speak of

* *A short Character of Austin.*

Austin was Bishop of *Hippo*; he flourished 288 Years after the Apostles: He was converted by *Ambrose*; after which he wholly set his Heart to convert others, and to build them up in their most holy Faith; regarding neither Riches nor Honour: He was an indefatigable Preacher of the Lord Jesus Christ, both by Life, and Doctrine: His usual Wish was, that Christ when he came, might find him either praying or preaching: He was very eminent for Charity; for he faithfully devoted to Works of Mercy and Piety all he had above the necessary Conveniences of Life. In his Time the *Goths* and *Vandals* broke in upon the *Roman Empire*, and into *Africa*, and besieged *Hippo*, where he lived. Many Bishops abandoned their Charge; but this holy Man of God continued to exhort his People to Constancy, and Perseverance in the Faith; resolving rather to suffer a thousand Deaths, than to forsake his Flock when they stood most in need of a faithful Shepherd. During the Siege he died: In his Sickness he breathed forth most pious Ejaculations: He made no Will, having nothing to bestow, but only Books. He died in the 76th Year of his Age.

the Penitent Thief, who obtained Salvation without Baptism, shews, that that is no more an Argument against the Necessity of Baptism, where it may be had, than the Example of *baptized Infants* obtaining Salvation without *Faith*, is an Argument against the Necessity of Faith, where the Subject is capable of it. Near the Conclusion of the fourth Book, he says, "And as the Thief who by Necessity went without Baptism, was saved, because by his Piety he had it spiritually : So where Baptism is had, tho' the Party by Necessity go without that [Faith] which the Thief had, yet he is saved."

"Which the *Whole Body of the Church* holds, as delivered to them, in the Case of little Infants baptized : Who certainly cannot yet believe with the Heart to Righteousness, or confess with the Mouth to Salvation, as the Thief could ; nay, by their Crying and Noise, while the Sacrament is administering, they disturb the holy Mysteries : And yet *no Christian Man of any Sort* will say, they are baptized to no Purpose."

"And if any one do ask for divine Authority in this Matter, though that which the whole Church practises, and which has not been instituted by Councils, but was ever in use, is very reasonably believed to be no other than a thing ordered by the *Authority of the Apostles* : Yet we may besides take a true Estimate, how much the Sacrament of Baptism does avail Infants, by the Circumcision which God's former People received." In what follows, he most plainly declares, that Baptism is to the *Christian* Infants, as Circumcision was to the *Jewish*.

Though *Austin* speaks of Infant-Baptism in this Place but occasionally, his Words are, we see, a full Evidence that it was then universally practised, and had been so beyond the Memory of any Man, or of any Record : That they took it to be a Thing that had not been enacted by any Council, but had been in use from the Beginning of Christianity. And they had then but 300 Years to look back to the Times of the Apostles, whereas we now have upwards of 1600.

And many Writings, and Records which are now lost, were then extant, and easily known.

Moreover, for the Sorts of Christians that were then, he says, that [*nullus Christianorum*] none of the Christians had any other Opinion, but that it was useful or necessary.

Austin, in his Letter to *Boniface*, a Bishop of his Acquaintance, mentions, that tho' the Parents in his Time usually offered up their Children to God in Baptism; yet that this Office might be done by any other that was a rightful Owner of the Child. Part of this Letter is as follows: " But I would not have you mistake, so as to think that the Bond of Guilt derived from *Adam* cannot be broken, unless the Children be offered for the receiving the Grace of Christ by their own Parents. For so you speak in your Letter, *That as the Parents were Authors of their Punishment, so they may also by the Faith of their Parents be justified.*

" Whereas you see that a great many are offered not by their Parents, as the Infant-Slaves are sometimes offered by their Masters: And sometimes when the Parents are dead, the Infants are baptized, being offered by any that can afford to shew this Compassion on them, are now and then taken up by the holy Virgins, and offered to Baptism by them who have no Children of their own, nor design to have any. And in all this, there is nothing else done than what is written in the Gospel, when our Lord asked, who was Neighbour to him that was wounded by Thieves, and left half dead in the Road? And it was answered, *He that shewed Mercy on him.*"

Here we see, that both *Austin* and *Boniface* took it for granted, that Infants are to be baptized, and (as was observed before) that the ordinary Use then was for the Parents themselves, to give up their Children to God by Baptism: But yet this was not counted so necessary, as that a Child could not be baptized without that Circumstance. Any Christian, that was on any

any equitable Account Owner of the Child, might dedicate it to God by that sacred Ordinance.

It deserves a particular Remark, that most of these Witnesses for Infant Baptism, were not only faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, but were faithful unto Death, joyfully suffering Martyrdom for the Truth: Surely, this is a great Accession to the Strength of their Testimony.

All these things put together, seem to afford Evidence sufficient to prove, that Infant-Baptism was practised in the Church of Christ from the *Beginning*, and consequently that it is of an *Apostolical* and *Divine* Original.

I am willing here to add, that Dr. Wall has assured us, that, "as for *the first four hundred Years*, there appears only one Man, *Tertullian*, that advised the Delay of Infant-Baptism in some Cases, and one *Gregory* that did perhaps practise such Delay in the Case of his Children; but no Society of Men so thinking, or so practising: So in the next seven hundred Years, there is not so much as one Man to be found, that either spoke for, or practised such Delay. But all the contrary. And when one Sect among the *Waldenses* declared against the baptizing of Infants, as being incapable of Salvation, the main Body of that People rejected their Opinion: And they of them that held that Opinion, quickly dwindled away, and disappeared; there being no more heard of holding that Tenet, till the rising of the *German Antipædobaptists*, in the Year 1522. And that all the national Churches now in the World do profess and practice Infant-Baptism."

This brings to my Remembrance a very clear Proof for the Baptism of Infants, which much satisfied the Mind of the Great and Good Mr. Baxter; I shall relate it in his own Words. "I am fully satisfied, that Mr. Tombs cannot shew me any Society (I think not one Man) that ever opened their Mouths against Baptism of Infants, till about 200 Years ago, or thereabout. Which confirms me much, that it is from the Apostles Times, or else some one would have

“ been found as an Opposer of it ; even as I profess
 “ seriously, that it much satisfieth my Conscience, that
 “ Christ and his Apostles did never shut the Infants of
 “ believing *Jews* (and consequently not of believing
 “ *Gentiles*) from being Members of his visible Church,
 “ in that I never find in all the New Testament one
 “ Word of Exception, Arguing, Murmuring, or Dis-
 “ satisfaction against it ; when as it cannot possibly be
 “ conceived, but those *Jews* who kept such a Stir be-
 “ fore they would let go Circumcision, the Sign of
 “ Church-Membership, when yet they had Baptism,
 “ another Sign, would undoubted have been much
 “ more scandalized at the unchurcing of all their
 “ Children, and would have much hardlier have let
 “ go that Privilege of their Church-Membership, or at
 “ least have raised some Scruple about it, which might
 “ have occasioned one Word of Satisfaction from some
 “ one of the Apostles, especially when *Paul* calls them
 “ Holy, and Christ saith, *Suffer them to come to me,*
 “ *and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of*
 “ *God.* I know not how Mr. T——, and such o-
 “ thers think on these things ; but, for my part, they
 “ stick so close to my Conscience, that I dare not say,
 “ Christ would have no Infants received into his visible
 “ Church among the Number of Christians, when I
 “ find he once placed them in the Church ; and neither
 “ Mr T——, nor any Man breathing, can shew me
 “ one Word of Scripture where-ever Christ did put
 “ them out again ; and yet these Men pretend to
 “ stand to the Determination of Scripture. I would
 “ this one Thing were impartially considered.”

But * this shall suffice for a Hint of this Controversy,
 which has filled large Volumes in the World, made a
 huge Noise in the Church, and destroyed the Charity
 of a multitude of Christians. Since I do not here pro-
 fess to enter into the Argument, but only to give a few
 short Notices, or Rehearsals, of what is said in our
 Vindication, who practice the Baptism of Infants by
 pouring Water on them, I do the rather ask leave to

speak one charitable Word on this Subject, *viz.* That since this Controversy has Difficulties attending it, Persons of an honest and sincere Soul, in searching out the Truth, may happen to run into different Opinions: And the things wherein we agree, are so important, as should not suffer us to quarrel about the lesser things wherein we differ. Our Brethren, who reject Infant-Baptism, as well as we who practise it, all agree in a Belief of the sacred Institution of this Ordinance, and in our Reverence for it: We all agree, that Children should be devoted to GOD, and should be Partakers of all the utmost Privileges into which Scripture admits them, and that they should grow up under all possible Obligations to Duty; and since each of us desires to find out the Will of Christ, and practise it accordingly, it is a most unreasonable thing, that we should be angry with each other, because some of us are devoted to God and Christ, by this Ceremony, a little *sooner* or a little *later* than others; or because some devote their Children to GOD in Baptism, as a Claim of Privileges and an Obligation to Duties, before they can do this for themselves, and are capable of acting therein: Or because some of us think, this Ordinance requires much Water, and that the whole Body be immersed in it; others suppose, a little is sufficient, and that he who hath the Face or Head washed in this Solemnity, has as true a Significancy of Gospel Benefits and Obligations, as he who has his whole Body put under Water, since our Saviour thought so when he washed *Peter's Feet*, *John* xiii. 10. In short, where Faith in Christ, and Love to GOD, and Obedience to the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit are made necessary to Salvation, and agreed upon by us all, it is pity that these lesser things should raise such unhappy and scandalous Contentions among the Disciples of the blessed Jesus, who is the Prince of Peace.

H Y M N S.

*Children devoted to God ; Gen. xvii. 7, 10.
Acts xvi. 14, 15, 33.*

(For those who practise Infant-Baptism.)

I.

THUS saith the Mercy of the Lord,
*I'll be a God to thee ;
I'll bless thy num'rous Race, and they
Shall be a Seed for me.*

II.

Abr'am believ'd the promis'd Grace,
And gave his Sons to God ;
But Water seals the Blessing now,
That once was seal'd with Blood.

III.

Thus *Lydia* sanctify'd her House,
When she receiv'd the Word ;
Thus the believing Jaylor gave
His Household to the Lord.

IV.

Thus later Saints, eternal King,
Thine ancient Truth embrace ;
To thee their Infant-Offspring bring,
And humbly claim the Grace.

Circumcision and Baptism.

*(Written only for those who practise the Baptism of
Infants.)*

I.

THUS did the Sons of *Abraham* pass
Under the bloody Seal of Grace ;
The young Disciples bore the Yoke,
Till *Christ* the painful Bondage broke.

II.

By milder Ways doth *Jesus* prove,
His Father's Cov'nant and his Love ;
He seals to Saints his glorious Grace,
And not forbids their Infant-Race.

III.

Their Seed is sprinkled with his Blood,
Their Children set apart for God ;
His Spirit on their Offspring shed
Like Water pour'd upon the Head.

IV.

Let every Saint with chearful Voice
In this large Covenant rejoice ;
Young Children in their early Days
Shall give the God of *Abraham* Praise.

Circumcision Abolished.

I.

TH E Promise was divinely free,
Extensive was the Grace ;
I will the God of Abr'ham be,
And of his num'rous Race.

II.

He said ; and with a bloody Seal
Confirm'd the Words he spoke ;
Long did the Sons of *Abr'ham* feel
The sharp and painful Yoke.

III.

Till God's own Son descending low
Gave his own Flesh to bleed ;
And Gentiles taste the Blessing now
From the hard Bondage freed.

IV.

The God of *Abr'ham* claims our Praise,
His Promises indure,
And *Christ* the Lord in gentler Ways
Makes the Salvation sure.

On St. MARK X. 14.

I.

SEE *Israel's* gentle Shepherd stands
 With all engaging Charms !
 Hark ! how he calls the tender Lambs,
 And folds them in his Arms !

II.

Permit them to approach, he cries,
 Nor scorn their humble Name :
 It was to bless such Souls as these,
 The Lord of Angels came.

III.

Ye little Flock, with Pleasure hear !
 Ye Children, seek his Face !
 And fly with Transport to receive
 The Blessings of his Grace !

IV.

We bring them, Lord, in thankful Hands,
 And yield them up to Thee :
 Joyful that we ourselves are Thine,
 Thine let our Offspring be.

V.

If Orphans they are left behind,
 Thy Guardian Care we trust :
 That Care shall heal our bleeding Hearts,
 While weeping o'er their Dust.

On St. LUKE xviii. 15, 16.

I.

JESUS ! What gracious Words are these ?
 Proclaim'd aloud by Thee,
 The pious Parent's Joy and Hope
 Of his Posterity :

II.

“ Behold ! I stand with open Arms,
 “ Your Infants to receive,
 “ Parents, that give yourselves to me,
 “ To me your Children give.

III.

III.

Encourag'd by such Grace we come,
 Dear Jesus, unto Thee :
 Gladly we would ourselves be thine,
 Thine may our Children be !

IV.

Nor more we ask, nor once complain,
 What else Thou does deny :
 If we and ours these Blessings share,
 It is enough, we cry.,

Another on the same Passage.

I.

SEE Majesty and Mildness meet
 In Jesus' Godlike Form.
 Hark, how his Lips divinely sweet,
 No humble Name can scorn.

II.

With Heart of Tenderness he cries,
 " Come to my Arms, ye Lambs ;
 " For you this Bosom open lies,
 And Blessings fill these Hands.

III.

> And dare we then forbid them come ?
 Can Parents Monsters prove ?
 Without Thee, Lord, we're all undone ;
 'Tis Life to have thy Love.

IV.

We bring them for thy Blessings, Lord,
 Thy Blessings all Divine :
 Now let thy Spirit with thy Word
 Fulfil thy kind Design.

V.

In Life, or Death, with thee we leave
 All that fond Parents boast :
 Thy Heart and Hands more Blessings give,
 Than our first Parents lost.

VI.

If thou art ours, and ours be thine,
 And this thy Spirit's Voice ;
 Peaceful we'll Orphans leave behind,
 Or childless we'll rejoice.

Family Religion, Gen. xviii. 19.

I.

Happy the House, like *Abra'm's*, blest
 With Heads that rule for GOD ;
 Where strict Religion stands confest ;
 Who chuse the narrow Road.

II.

'Tis there Divine Instructions flow,
 In one perpetual Stream ;
 'Tis there each Child and Servant too,
 The Paths of Wisdom learn.

III.

There Morning Prayers, like Incense rise,
 And sacred Odours shed,
 And there, at Evening Sacrifice
 The Wings of Peace o'erspread.

IV.

Thence pious Youth descend and teach
 New Families of their own ;
 While true Religion lives to reach
 The Families yet unborn.

V.

Such, Lord, let every House be made
 In this degenerate Day,
 And thy dread Wrath be still delay'd
 Where Families praise and pray.

VI.

Houses of GOD let all become,
 That *Zion's* Dust may rise ;
 That Jesus may resume his Throne,
 And reign beneath the Skies.

15 JY 64

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	<i>Justin</i>

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Origen, p. 29. *Ambrose*, p. 35. and *Austin*, p. 36. do each of them expressly affirm, that the Baptism of Infants was ordered by the Apostles, and practised in their Time.

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15 JY 64

F I N I S,

